

Iowa City Community School District

RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY GUIDE 2026

Building Belonging, Relationships, Accountability, and Hope



**IOWA CITY COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

All In for All Kids



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WELCOME TO THE ICCSD RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY

The Iowa City Community School District believes that every student, family member, educator, and community partner deserves to belong to a safe, supportive, collaborative, and inclusive learning community.

Restorative Communities are built on the belief that relationships are the foundation of learning, growth, accountability, and success. Our District serves more than 14,000 students and is the 2nd largest school district in the state of Iowa. We cover roughly 133 square miles with 20 preschool sites, 20 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 comprehensive high schools, 1 alternative high school, 1 online school, and our Transition Services Center, a program for special education students ages 18-21.

Within each of those 133 square miles and 48 buildings is our community. And within each of those buildings are more, smaller communities. Each of those 14,000 students, and thousands of staff members and their families, are our community, too. We value and support each and every one of them, and this guide is for all of us.



A RESTORATIVE VISION

Our mission is to move towards transformational education to support our staff, students, and stakeholders. This document will guide our work to wrap our district's community in accountability of courageous social honesty, rooted in restorative practices in all of our buildings.

Beginning with an understanding of what restorative practices are and how to develop a restorative mindset, the guide also includes resources and tools for administrators, educators, staff members, and students to begin evaluating existing practices, as well as resources for strengthening the restorative community in our own schools. This guide was adapted by the ICCSD Restorative team from a wide variety of resources linked and cited in this document.

This guide serves as a living framework for creating school communities where people feel valued, heard, connected, challenged, and supported.

Restorative practices are not a program.

They are a way of being.

They are a commitment to building relationships, strengthening community, repairing hurt, and creating conditions where all people can thrive.

OUR WHY

Every child deserves:

- To be known
- To be valued
- To be heard
- To be challenged
- To belong

Research consistently demonstrates that students learn best when they feel emotionally safe, connected, and respected.

The purpose of restorative communities is not simply to reduce discipline referrals.

The purpose is creating environments where:

- Relationships flourish
- Students develop empathy
- Accountability is meaningful
- Diversity is celebrated
- Harm is repaired
- Learning is maximized

At ICCSD, restorative communities support our commitment to educational excellence, equity, belonging, and student success.

THE ICCSD PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE VISION

At the core of all our work, the foundation of an Iowa City Community School District professional is to be a Relationship Builder.

Relationships are at the heart of learning, belonging, accountability, and growth. Every interaction with students, families, colleagues, and community members provides an opportunity to strengthen trust, foster connection, and create conditions where all individuals can thrive.

Restorative Communities are built through intentional relationships. Therefore, the competencies expected of ICCSD educators closely align with the values of restorative practices.

CORE COMPETENCIES OF AN IOWA CITY EDUCATOR

Reflective

An Iowa City Educator is a lifelong learner who continually refines their practice in support of student outcomes.

Reflective educators:

- Embrace curiosity.
- Seek feedback.
- Learn, unlearn, and relearn.
- Consider multiple perspectives.
- Apply learning to new situations.
- Model growth and continuous improvement.

Restorative Connection:

Reflection is essential to accountability, learning, and repair.

Empathetic

An Iowa City Educator demonstrates awareness, sensitivity, concern, and respect for others.

Empathetic educators:

- Consider feelings and perspectives.
- Honor lived experiences.
- Value cultural identities.
- Create emotionally safe learning environments.
- Support students through mistakes and growth.

Restorative Connection:

Empathy creates the conditions necessary for belonging and relationship building.

Collaborative

An Iowa City Educator leverages strengths and builds collective commitment toward continuous improvement.

Collaborative educators:

- Learn with and from others.
- Seek collective solutions.
- Welcome feedback.
- Build partnerships.
- Contribute to shared goals.

Restorative Connection:
Strong communities are built through collective responsibility.

Culturally Responsive

An Iowa City Educator promotes educational opportunity, access, and culturally responsive practices for all students.

Culturally responsive educators:

- Examine personal bias.
- Maintain high expectations.
- Foster inclusive environments.
- Build authentic partnerships with families.
- Honor cultural identities and experiences.

Restorative Connection:
Belonging requires dignity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.

THE PORTRAIT OF AN ICCSD GRADUATE

The ICCSD Portrait of a Graduate articulates our community's aspirations for every student.

Restorative Communities help students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for success in school, career, and life.

The six Portrait of a Graduate competencies align directly with restorative values and practices.

THE ICCSD RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

Belonging

"I am welcome here."

Relationships

"I am known here."

Voice

"My experiences matter here."

Accountability

"My actions affect others."

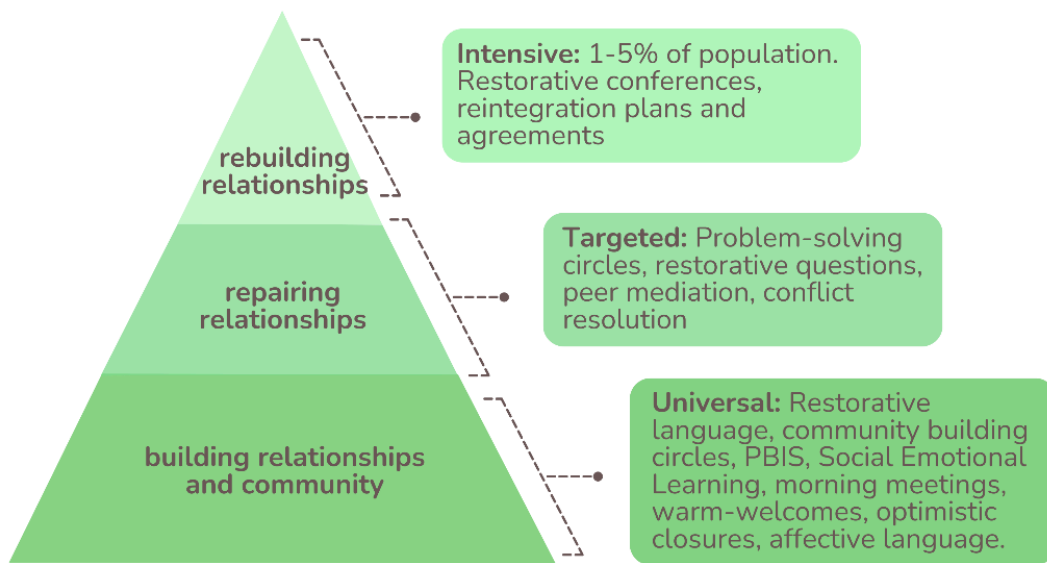
Repair

"We can heal harm together."

Growth

"We move forward stronger."

These six elements guide all restorative work throughout the district.



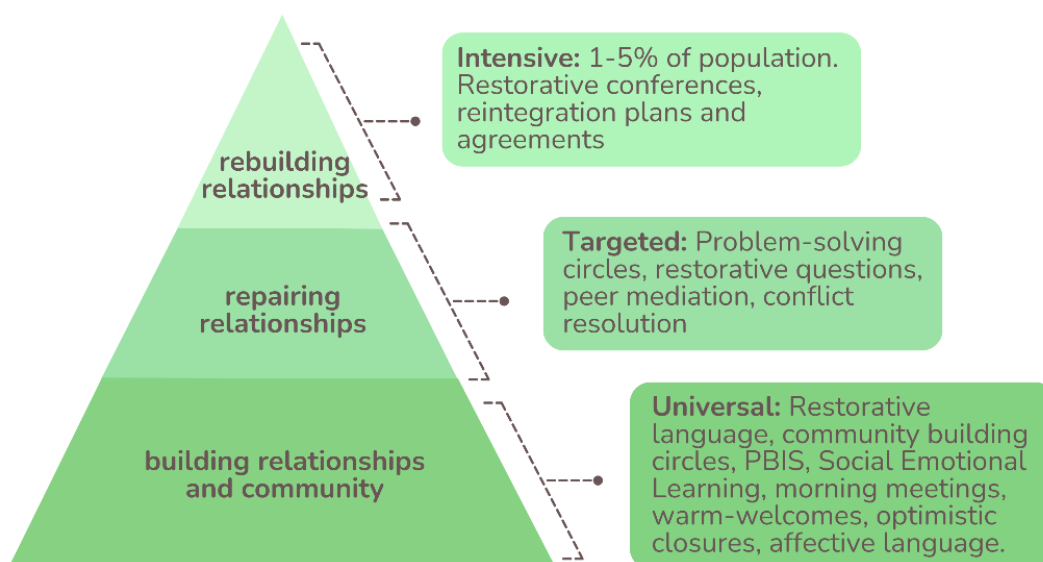
RESTORATIVE MINDSET AND BELIEFS

A restorative mindset recognizes:

- Relationships are central.
- Everyone has dignity.
- Every voice matters.
- Conflict creates opportunities for learning.
- Accountability includes repairing harm.
- Healing strengthens communities.
- Growth is always possible.

Core Beliefs:

- We do not give up on people.
- Behavior is communication.
- Strong relationships improve outcomes.
- Community creates responsibility.
- Repair is more powerful than punishment.
- Every individual contributes to the collective well-being of the community.



COMMUNITY BEFORE CORRECTION

You cannot restore a community that has never been built.

The most effective restorative schools invest heavily in proactive relationship-building.

Restorative communities prioritize:

Connection before correction.

Relationships before compliance.

Curiosity before judgment.

Support alongside accountability.

Every interaction becomes an opportunity to strengthen community.

THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

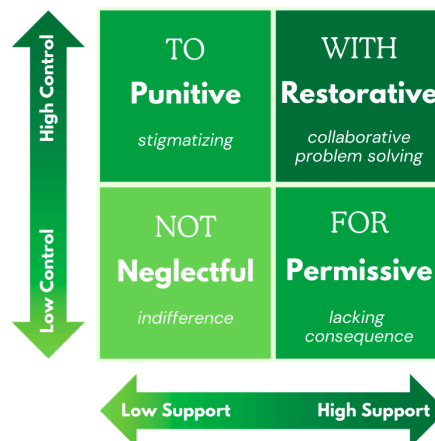
WITH
High Support / High Accountability

FOR
High Support / Low Accountability

TO
High Accountability / Low Support

NOT
Low Accountability / Low Support

Restorative educators strive to work



WITH students rather than doing things TO them, FOR them, or neglecting them altogether.

The WITH approach develops responsibility, trust, ownership, and resilience.

EQUITY, BELONGING, AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Restorative communities honor the dignity and worth of every individual.

We recognize that students and families bring diverse:

- Cultures
- Languages
- Histories
- Identities
- Experiences

Restorative practices support equity by:

- Elevating student voice
- Building culturally responsive environments
- Addressing disproportionality
- Increasing access and belonging
- Strengthening relationships across differences

Belonging means more than being present.

Belonging means being valued.

STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

Restorative Communities and the Portrait of a Graduate

Student leadership opportunities, restorative circles, community service, and relationship-centered learning provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop the six Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Adaptability

Students learn to navigate challenges, resolve conflict, and respond constructively to changing situations.

Empathy

Students practice understanding the experiences and perspectives of others.

Communication

Students learn to listen deeply, express themselves effectively, and engage in respectful dialogue.

Global Citizenship

Students develop responsibility for their school, community, and world.

Critical Thinking

Students reflect, problem-solve, and consider multiple perspectives.

Learner's Mindset

Students embrace growth, curiosity, resilience, and continuous learning.

Through restorative communities, students do not simply learn these competencies—they actively practice them every day.

Students are co-creators of school culture.

Restorative communities intentionally develop leadership opportunities.

Examples include:

- Empathy Advocates

- Student Leadership Teams
- Peer Mentors
- Restorative Ambassadors
- Circle Keepers
- Welcoming Teams
- Service Learning Projects
- Youth Advisory Councils

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Restorative communities extend beyond school walls.



Families are essential partners.

Community partnerships strengthen belonging and support.

We commit to:

- Welcoming family voice
- Creating accessible opportunities for participation
- Communicating with transparency
- Building trust through collaboration
- Recognizing families as experts on their children

Community partnerships may include:

Universities

Nonprofits

Faith Communities

Local Businesses

Youth Organizations

Cultural Organizations

Mental Health Providers

Together, we create a stronger community network for students.

Restorative Mindset	Non-Restorative Mindset
Intentionally builds relationships and trust within a community	Assumes relationships and trusts exist automatically
Values and welcomes multiple perspectives	Sides with a perspective that aligns with their own values, beliefs, or truths
When harm is caused, the harm-doer is asked to take an active role in repairing it	When harm is caused, the harm-doer is punished or excluded
Interpersonal conflicts are resolved by dialogue that gets to the root of the conflict and finds the best ways to move forward. It includes all parties involved	Interpersonal conflicts do not need to be resolved; they disappear, or are resolved by screaming, violence, or other unhealthy mechanisms
When harm is caused, those affected are acknowledged as needing support	Adapted from the Umoja Student Development Corporation
Believes that ownership of a conversation or process should be collective	

Educators will be familiar with McCold and Wachtel's (2003) Social Discipline Window, or its precursor by Baumrind and Braithwaite, which describes the relationship between support and control in classroom management. For many, a shift towards a restorative mindset means one away from a punitive approach; instead of doing

ADULT CULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Students experience restorative culture when adults model restorative practices.

Adult commitments include:

Listen to understand.

Address conflict directly.

Repair hurts.

Honor multiple perspectives.

Practice empathy.

Support collective growth.

Adult circles may be used for:

Team building

Staff meetings

Problem solving

Celebrations

Reflection

Professional learning

A restorative school begins with restorative adults.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

Informal Practices

- Greetings
- Check-ins
- Affective Statements
- Relationship Building

Semi-Formal Practices

- Community Circles
- Problem Solving Circles
- Restorative Conversations
- Peer Mediation

Formal Practices

- Restorative Conferences
- Re-Entry Meetings
- Reintegration Circles
- Restorative Support Teams

Classroom Practice	Restorative Mindset
Physical Arrangement Traffic patterns are clearly defined Furniture arrangement accommodates all needs and is arranged for maximum visibility and access Materials are clearly labeled, easily accessible, and organized for ease of use	Provides access for everyone to interact in the community. Encourages collaboration and relationship building with others within a welcoming and safe space rather than, creating uncertainty, a sense of coddling that inhibits interactions with multiple perspectives, or a clinic overly focused on processes.
Establishing Expectations, Rules, and Routines Aligned with community-wide expectations Observable, measurable, positively stated, clearly defined, and prominently posted	Everyone has a voice in defining the school-wide expectations through agreed-upon classroom rules and procedures. This creates a community that is responsible for each other and the productive processes of collaboration. Rules and procedures are established as positively stated and pro-social agreements with everyone. Routines support regulation, can develop social-emotional competencies, and can strengthen relationships.

Classroom Practice	Restorative Mindset
A plan and schedule to actively include everyone in the creation and revisiting of expectations and procedures	This builds a community around values and norms rather than uncertainty, mere suggestions on how we relate to each other, or top-down demands.
Active Supervision Scan: Emotional and physical safety Move: All areas with intention Interact: Connect, encourage, reinforce, and pre- correct	Provides a sense of belonging for everyone with physical and emotional safety. Interactions develop and strengthen relationships rather than feeling alone, inhibiting independence like a hovering helicopter, or forced compliance like a guard.
Encouraging Appropriate Behavior Feedback through behavior specific praise statements aligned with community expectations Group and individual acknowledgements to reinforce agreed upon skills 5:1 praise to correction ratio	Focuses on authentic strengths and connection. Provides a foundation to building relationships, and keeps adults in a growth mindset. Positive specific feedback builds a sense of belonging and connection. It encourages everyone to do what was agreed upon rather than experiencing the uncertainty of unclear boundaries, short lived connections through flattery, or harming trust due to harsh criticism.
Responding to Problem Behavior Continuum of responses includes: re-teaching of skills, providing choice, redirection, and conferencing Feedback is specific and positively stated and connects to community expectations	Acknowledges the need to put repairing harm done to relationships and people over the need to assign blame or give out punishment, rather than unclear boundaries leading to feeling unsafe, rescue without ownership, or assign blame without repair.
Engagement and Opportunities to Respond Increase opportunities for individual and group responses Opportunities to respond include verbal, written, and action	Active participation with high rates of involvement increases opportunities to make connections and build relationships. All voices are equally important. Intentional use of strategies that allow for all voices to be understood rather than encouraging ideas to be hidden, doing fluffy activities that fill space instead of create meaningful connections, or establish a dominant voice that tells but does not listen.

Adapted from Lincoln Public Schools, Midwest PBIS 2021

TIER ONE: BUILDING COMMUNITY

Purpose: Create belonging and connection for every student.

Examples:

Morning Meetings

Community Circles

Warm Welcomes

Optimistic Closures

Relationship Mapping

SEL Lessons

Community Agreements

Celebration Circles

Classroom Norm Development

Tier One is prevention.

Strong communities reduce future conflict.

Affective language: Using “I” statements and feelings statements help us with self-awareness, accountability, and emotional regulation.

-  Empathetic Listening and I Statements - CPS Guide and Toolkit.pdf
-  Teaching Students to use I feel statements.docx
-  Affective Statement Sentence Stems Student Copy.docx
-  Constructing an Affective Statement handout.docx
-  Restorative Communication Handout.pdf

Defining Respect: The word “respect” has different connotations to different people. Some believe it is earned; some believe it must be given no matter what. Having a common definition of respect is essential.

- [Respect Lesson - Character Counts!](#)
- [Respect Lesson and Activities - The Responsive Counselor](#)

Classroom Values and Norms

Alongside PBIS expectations, classrooms and other building communities should discuss and create their own values and norms for a safe, collaborative culture. These norms and values can be revisited, updated, and changed as new members of the

community join, or as the community changes in other ways. Norms and values help hold a community accountable to itself.

- [Creating Classroom Norms With Students | Edutopia](#)
- [5 Tips for Creating Collectivist Classroom Culture](#)
- [List of common classroom values](#)
- [Developing Classroom Values Collaboratively With Students](#)

Community Building

Warm Welcomes and check-ins

- [Starting Each Class With a Warm Welcome | Edutopia](#)
- [10 Student Check-In Activities to Connect and Understand - Social Emotional Workshop](#)
- [Building a Better Check-In](#)
- [NewRoot Ice-Breakers and Check-in Questions for Remote Learning.pdf](#)

Games & Activities

- [Philosophical Chairs - Edutopia](#)
- [Community Building Games List - Created by Staff at SEJH](#)
- [Restorative Games](#)
- [GROK Cards](#)
- [Games and Energizers](#)

Morning Meetings and Community Building Circles

Circles and morning meetings in Tier One are not for resolving conflict, but for building relationships; you cannot restore a community before you have built one. Morning meetings and community building circles capitalize on the power of connection through storytelling. Restorative Justice expert Kay Pranis explains, “storytelling is fundamental for healthy social relationships. To feel connected and respected we need to tell our own stories and have others listen. For others to feel respected and connected to us, they need to tell their stories and have us listen. [...] The circle represents a fundamental change in the relationship between students and authority figures. It creates a cooperative atmosphere in which students take responsibility for their actions. Students respond because they feel respected and realize that what they say matters.” The following resources are for developing community building circles and/or morning meetings from a restorative perspective.

- [What Is Morning Meeting? | Responsive Classroom](#)
-  [10 Days of Building Community and Circle Capacity Curriculum.pdf](#)
-  [Classroom Circle Guide - CPS Guide and Toolkit.pdf](#)
- Other types of Tier One circles include: Celebration circles, Welcome circles, Curriculum circles, Decision Making circles, Norm-setting circles.

Circle Support Resources

-  [Would You Rather Questions](#)
-  [Circle Question Ideas.pdf](#)

-  Community Building Questions Kay Pranis.pdf
-  Blob Bridge.jpg
-  Blob Soccer.jpg
-  Blob Tree.jpg
- [Feelings Wheel](#)
- [Feelings Chart](#)

TIER TWO: RESPONDING TO HARM “HURT”

Purpose: Address conflict early.

Strategies:

- Restorative Conversations
- Restorative Questions
- Peer Mediation
- Small Group Circles
- Student Leadership Supports
- Mentoring
- Check-In/Check-Out
- Targeted Relationship Building
- *Goal:* Repair relationships before harm escalates.

Restorative Questions

Staff and students can be trained to use the Restorative Question protocol for any interpersonal conflicts. There is a set of questions to ask the person who has been harmed, and a different set to ask the person who has caused harm. Both sets of questions ask not only what happened, but about how both people were feeling and how they think the other people might have been feeling, with the aim of making the situation better.

Questions for the person hurt:

- What happened?
- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Questions for the person who caused the hurt:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Ideas for implementing the Restorative Questions school-wide include training paraprofessionals, custodians, bus-drivers, food-service workers and volunteers, and having students practice with role-playing situations.

- [Printable Question Cards](#)
-  Restorative Conversations - CPS Guide and Toolkit.pdf

TIER THREE: RESTORING AND REINTEGRATING COMMUNITY

Purpose: Address significant harm and restore relationships.

Practices include:

- Formal Conferences
- Reintegration Plans
- Family Conferences
- Restorative Student Support Teams
- Re-Entry Circles
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- *Questions guiding Tier Three work:*
- What happened?
- Who was affected?
- What harm occurred?
- What needs to happen now?
- How do we move forward together?

RESTORATIVE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Affective Statements

- I felt concerned when...
- I felt proud when...
- I felt frustrated because...
- I appreciated when...
- *Restorative Questions*
- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- Who has been affected?
- What needs to happen now?

Restorative Language Shifts

Instead of:

What's wrong with you?

Try:

What happened?

Instead of:

Why did you do that?

Try:

What were you thinking at the time?

Instead of:

You need to calm down.

Try:

How can I support you right now?

Instead of:

You're in trouble.

Try:

Let's talk about how we can repair this.

IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Implementation requires:

- Leadership Commitment
- Professional Learning
- Coaching
- Data Reflection
- Family Partnerships
- Student Leadership
- Continuous Improvement

District Expectations:

All staff contribute to community building.

All students experience regular opportunities for connection and voice.

All schools integrate restorative practices into existing PBIS, MTSS, and HRS frameworks.

Progress is measured through:

HRS Levels 1, 2, and 3 & Panorama

ICCSD Educator Competencies	Restorative Community
Reflective	Reflection, accountability, growth
Empathetic	Belonging, relationships, repair
Collaborative	Community, shared responsibility
Culturally Responsive	Equity, dignity, inclusion

And then:

Portrait of a Graduate	Restorative Community
Adaptability	Problem-solving and resilience
Empathy	Understanding others
Communication	Circles and dialogue
Global Citizen	Community responsibility
Critical Thinking	Reflection and perspective-taking
Learner's Mindset	Growth and continuous improvement

Student Voice

Family Feedback

Behavior Data

Academic Engagement

Sense of Belonging Indicators

Restorative implementation is a journey, not an event.

THE ICCSD RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

We commit to:

- Building relationships before responding to behavior.
- Listening before judging.
- Seeking understanding before assigning blame.
- Creating spaces where every voice matters.
- Repairing harm rather than excluding people.
- Valuing diversity and honoring dignity.
- Supporting growth and accountability.
- Strengthening community through empathy, courage, and compassion.
- Because every person matters.
- Every relationship matters.
- Every community matters.
- Together, we build restorative communities where all belong.

SECTION 18

RESTORATIVE REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION PRACTICES

Purpose

A restorative community believes that mistakes do not define people.

When students experience suspension, significant behavioral incidents, or prolonged absences from their learning community, intentional support is necessary to restore relationships, reaffirm their sense of belonging, and establish a successful path forward.

The purpose of restorative reentry is to:

- Reaffirm that the student belongs in the community
- Strengthen relationships between home and school
- Address harm and accountability
- Identify supports and interventions
- Establish clear expectations moving forward
- Promote successful reintegration

Reentry is not a punishment.

Reentry is a process of restoration, accountability, healing, and support.

THREE LEVELS OF RESTORATIVE REENTRY

Level 1 Restorative Circle

Purpose

Level 1 Reentry Circles are utilized when a suspension or significant incident requires a structured reentry process involving multiple stakeholders.

These circles focus on:

- Accountability
- Repairing relationships
- Reintegration
- Family engagement
- Student support planning

Duration

45–60 Minutes

Timeline

The reentry meeting should occur:

- Prior to the student's return to school at least 2 days prior

Elementary Level 1 Reentry Circle

Required Participants

- Student
- Parent/Guardian
- Administrator
- Counselor
- Student Preferred Teacher or Support Staff
- School Facilitator Assistant (SFA)
- Case Manager or Behavior Interventionist (when applicable)
- Restorative Practices Representative

Planning Steps

1. Notify Restorative Practices Team immediately upon suspension assignment.
2. Schedule meeting and communicate details.
3. Determine whether a safety plan is necessary.
4. Assign follow-up supports.

5. Identify trusted adult check-in person.
6. Create intervention plan.

Possible Interventions

- 2 x 10 Relationship Strategy
- Check and Connect
- Check-In / Check-Out
- Social Academic Instructional Group (SAIG)
- School Counseling Lessons
- Community Building Circle Participation
- Mentoring Support

Secondary Level 1 Reentry Circle

Required Participants

- Student
- Parent/Guardian
- Administrator
- Educational Intervention Specialist (EIS)
- Counselor
- Preferred Teacher or Trusted Adult
- Case Manager or BI (when applicable)
- Restorative Practices Representative

Possible Interventions

- Navigate360 Supports
- DBT Skill Groups
- Check and Connect
- Check-In / Check-Out
- SEL Small Groups
- Mentoring
- Academic Support Plans

LEVEL 2 RESTORATIVE REENTRY CIRCLE

Purpose

Level 2 Reentry Circles are facilitated by trained building staff and focus on reflection, relationship repair, support planning, and accountability.

Duration

25–45 Minutes

Facilitator

Building-trained restorative staff member

Circle Structure

Opening

Facilitator selects:

- Quote
- Poem
- Song lyric
- Community value

Check-In

How are you feeling today?

Collective Value Setting

What values do we need in this circle so everyone feels safe, respected, and heard?

Examples:

- Respect
- Courage
- Honesty
- Empathy
- Patience
- Accountability
- Kindness

Group Agreement:

- Can we all agree to do our best to uphold these values today?

Storytelling Round

Elementary Prompt:

- Tell us about a time when you felt safe and cared for.

Secondary Prompt:

- Tell us about a time you turned a difficult situation into a success.

Reflection Rounds

- What have you been thinking about since the incident?
- What has been the hardest part?
- What has been the best part?
- What have you learned?
- What support do you need moving forward?
- What ideas do you have to prevent a similar situation?

Support Planning

Review proposed support plan.

Ask:

- What would you like to add?
- What feels helpful?
- What questions do you have?

Check-Out

- How are you feeling now?
- What is our agreement moving forward?
- Who will support you?
- Do we need another circle?

CIRCLE TEMPLATE

Opening	• Pick an inspirational poem, quote, saying or song of your choice.
Check In	• How are you feeling today? (Include processing faces or memes that indicate a variety of feelings) • What's one plan you have after graduation?
Collective Value Setting	• What values would you like to offer in this circle to make sure you show up as your best self? • Can we all agree that we will try our best to adhere to these values?
Story Telling	• Identify a time you felt most safe. Share where you were and or who is with you. • Identify a time when you were younger and you made lemonade out of lemons. • Identify a time when you needed someone to forgive you, and they did. How did that make you feel?
Rounds	• What are you thinking/feeling since the incident? • What's been the hardest/best part for you? • What do you need in order to move forward? What staff would you like to help hold you accountable? • Look at the proposed plan we created for you, what would you like to add? What questions do you have about the support plan?
Check Out	• How are you feeling now? • To be clear, what is our agreement for the future? • Is there anything that was left unsaid that needs to be said in order to move forward? • _____ will check in with you in a couple of days. Do you think we need another circle like this?

SECONDARY LEVEL 2 ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

Storytelling

Tell us about a time you needed forgiveness.

- How did receiving forgiveness impact you?
- What is one goal you have after high school?

Reflection

- What staff member helps you be your best self?
- What support will help you stay successful?
- What accountability do you need from us?

LEVEL 3 RESTORATIVE DIALOGUE: LEARNING AND TEACHING RESTORATION MEETING

Purpose

Clarification of Purpose

A Level 3 Restorative Dialogue is intended to address a clearly identified classroom disruption that resulted in a student's temporary removal from the learning environment. Prior to the conversation, the behavior or disruption should be specifically defined so that all participants have a shared understanding of what occurred and how it impacted teaching, learning, relationships, and the classroom community.

The purpose of the dialogue is not to assign blame, shame, or revisit consequences. Instead, the conversation should focus on understanding the impact of the disruption, identifying unmet needs, restoring relationships, and developing a plan that supports both student success and a productive learning environment.

Facilitators should ensure that the conversation does not create additional harm for the student or become a forum for criticism, lecturing, or emotional escalation. Likewise, the process should be structured in a way that allows educators to discuss concerns without feeling blamed, attacked, or retraumatized by the incident.

Whenever possible, the conversation should identify:

- The specific disruption that interfered with learning or teaching.
- The impact the disruption had on the student, teacher, peers, and classroom community.
- What support, skills, or interventions may be needed moving forward.
- Clear agreements for future success.

If concerns remain unresolved following the Level 3 Restorative Dialogue, either the student or the teacher may request an additional restorative process. Depending on the situation, this may include:

- A facilitated restorative conversation between the student and teacher.
- A restorative problem-solving meeting.
- A restorative circle involving relevant participants.

The purpose of the follow-up process is to clearly identify classroom conditions, behaviors, or relational concerns that may be preventing the student from fully engaging in learning and/or preventing the teacher from effectively facilitating instruction. Through dialogue, participants work together to develop shared

understanding, restore relationships, and create agreements that support a positive and productive classroom environment for all.

Duration

20–25 Minutes

Facilitator

Trained building staff member

Conversation Guide

How are you feeling? What are you thinking?	
We will take a minute and each discuss why we are so excited for your return.	
In retrospect, what could you have done differently to avoid this type of situation?	
What can you do going forward to make sure this does not happen again and in what ways can we support you?	
Here are our expectations for you going forward. Would you like clarity? Would you like to add anything?	
How are you feeling now?	

SECTION 19

ICCSO RESTORATIVE TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Reentry Planning Form

Student Name: _____

Date of Reentry Meeting: _____

Date of Follow-Up: _____

Trusted Adult: _____

Safety Plan Needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Interventions Assigned:

☐ Check-In / Check-Out

☐ Check and Connect

☐ 2 x 10 Strategy

☐ Counseling

☐ SAIG

☐ SEL Group

☐ Navigate360

☐ DBT Support

☐ Mentoring

☐ Other: _____

Follow-Up Reflection Form

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

How are things going since returning?

What has been successful?

What challenges remain?

What support is helping?

What support is still needed?

Adult Follow-Up Notes

Trusted Adult Commitment

I agree to:

- Check in regularly.
- Celebrate successes.
- Provide accountability.
- Listen without judgment.
- Help problem solve.

Adult Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Reintegration Success Indicators

The student:

- Attends regularly
- Participates positively
- Uses support systems
- Demonstrates accountability
- Rebuilds peer relationships
- Rebuilds adult relationships
- Meets behavioral expectations
- Demonstrates growth

Comments:

ICCSD REENTRY PHILOSOPHY

Every student deserves another opportunity.

Every student deserves belonging.

Every student deserves support.

Accountability and compassion can exist together.

When students return to school, our goal is not simply compliance.

Our goal is restoration, reconnection, and growth.

APPENDIX A

CIRCLE KEEPER HANDBOOK

The Role of the Circle Keeper

A Circle Keeper creates the conditions for connection, trust, reflection, and healing.

The Circle Keeper is not:

- A lecturer
- A disciplinarian
- A problem solver
- A judge

The Circle Keeper is:

- A facilitator
- A listener
- A relationship builder
- A guide

Core Responsibilities

Before the Circle

- Prepare prompts
- Arrange the space
- Identify talking piece
- Review purpose
- Anticipate support needs

During the Circle

- Model vulnerability
- Maintain emotional safety
- Honor all voices
- Protect agreements
- Encourage participation

After the Circle

- Follow up

- Celebrate growth
- Identify next steps
- Maintain relationships

Circle Agreements

Speak from the heart.

Listen from the heart.

Respect the talking piece.

Trust the process.

Honor confidentiality.

Lean into discomfort.

Expect and accept non-closure.

APPENDIX B

ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY BUILDING CIRCLES

Kindergarten–Grade 2

Belonging Questions

- What is your favorite animal?
- What makes you smile?
- Who helps you feel safe?
- What is your favorite thing about school?
- What is something you are good at?

Friendship Questions

- What makes a good friend?
- How do you help others?
- What is kindness?
- How do you know someone cares about you?

Reflection Questions

- What is something you learned this week?
- What is something you are proud of?
- What is something you would like help with?

Grades 3–5

Community Questions

- What does belonging mean?
- What helps you trust someone?
- What makes a classroom feel safe?
- What is one way you help our community?

Leadership Questions

- What does leadership look like?
- How can students make school better?
- What is one positive change you would like to see?

APPENDIX C

MIDDLE SCHOOL CIRCLE GUIDE

Identity and Belonging

- What is something people should know about you?
- When do you feel most confident?
- What does respect look like?
- What helps you feel connected?

Empathy and Perspective

- Describe a time someone misunderstood you.
- How do you know when someone needs support?
- What helps you forgive others?

Community Building

- What makes a great school community?
- How can we support one another?
- What would make middle school better for everyone?

APPENDIX D

HIGH SCHOOL CIRCLE GUIDE

Leadership

- What legacy do you want to leave?
- Who has influenced you most?
- What kind of leader are you becoming?

Future Planning

- What are your goals?
- What challenges have shaped you?
- What motivates you to keep going?

Civic Responsibility

- How do we create a better community?
- What responsibility do we have to each other?
- What changes would you like to see in our world?

APPENDIX E

EMPATHY ADVOCATE FRAMEWORK

Purpose

Empathy Advocates are student leaders who help build belonging, connection, and restorative community.

Core Responsibilities

- Welcome new students
- Participate in community circles
- Support school-wide initiatives
- Promote kindness and inclusion
- Model restorative language
- Assist with community-building events
- Support younger students

Leadership Values

- Empathy
- Respect
- Courage
- Integrity
- Service
- Belonging
- Accountability
- Hope

APPENDIX F

RESTORATIVE STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

Purpose

The Restorative Student Support Team collaborates to identify supports that keep students connected to school while addressing behavioral concerns.

Team Membership

- Administrator
- Counselor
- Teacher
- Family Representative
- Student (when appropriate)
- Behavior Interventionist
- School Facilitator
- Restorative Practices Representative

Guiding Questions

- What happened?
- What strengths does the student bring?
- What supports already exist?
- What barriers are present?
- What additional supports are needed?
- How will progress be monitored?

APPENDIX G

TRUSTED ADULT PROGRAM

Purpose

Every student deserves at least one trusted adult in school.

Research consistently demonstrates that connection with a caring adult improves attendance, behavior, belonging, and academic outcomes.

Trusted Adult Responsibilities

- Check in regularly
- Celebrate successes
- Provide encouragement
- Maintain accountability
- Advocate for student needs
- Communicate with families
- Support goal setting

APPENDIX H

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP TOOLKIT

Family Circle Questions

- What are your hopes for your child?
- What are your child's strengths?
- How can school support your family?
- What helps your child feel successful?

Family Engagement Commitments

We will:

- Welcome family voice.
- Communicate respectfully.
- Partner in problem solving.
- Recognize family strengths.
- Honor cultural perspectives.

APPENDIX I

ADULT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Staff Circle Prompts

- What brought you into education?
- Who inspired you?
- What gives you hope?
- What challenge are you currently navigating?
- What support do you need from colleagues?

Adult Community Agreements

- Assume positive intent.
- Address conflict directly.
- Listen to understand.
- Seek understanding before judgment.
- Repair harm when needed.
- Celebrate growth.

APPENDIX J

SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION RUBRIC

Emerging

Community circles occur occasionally.

Limited restorative language.

Few reentry structures.

Developing

Community circles occur regularly.

Staff use restorative language.

Reentry structures established.

Student leadership opportunities emerging.

Sustaining

Restorative practices integrated school-wide.

Strong student leadership systems.

Consistent family partnerships.

Reentry and reintegration processes are functioning effectively.

Transforming

Restorative practices embedded in culture.

Students lead restorative initiatives.

Families actively engaged.

Strong sense of belonging evident throughout the community.

FINAL DISTRICT COMMITMENT

The Iowa City Community School District is committed to creating communities where every student is:

- Known.
- Valued.
- Heard.
- Supported.
- Challenged.
- Connected.

We recognize that relationships are the foundation of learning and that restorative communities are built intentionally through empathy, accountability, belonging, and hope.

Together, we will continue building schools where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, and every community member has a place to belong.